

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOT-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 SCI-06 PA-04

PRS-01 USIA-15 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SS-20 NSC-07 PM-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7896

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BONN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 07734

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN, SENV, UK, FR

SUBJECT: CIVAIR: CONCORDE

REF: LONDON 3886

1. WE FULLY SUPPORT RECOMMENDATION PARA 2 REFTEL FOR POSTPONEMENT OF ISSUANCE OF NPRM ON SST ENGINE EMISSIONS. WE HAVE ENOUGH PROBLEMS THESE DAYS WITH THE FRENCH WITHOUT NEEDLESSLY WISHING MORE ON OURSELVES.

2. DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS CONCORDE HAS BEEN AN IRRITANT IN RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES BECAUSE OF FRENCH SUSPICION OF OUR MOTIVES TOWARD CONCORDE AFTER THE DECISION TO ABANDON OUR OWN SST DEVELOPMENT. IT WAS THE SUBJECT OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN OUR TWO PRESIDENTS. IN TIME, AND IT WAS NOT EASY, THESE SUSPICIONS WERE EXORCIZED. IT WOULD BE FOLLY NOW TO RESUSCITATE THEM WHEN WE CAN AVOID DOING SO BY DELAYING ISSUANCE OF THE NPRM
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BY A FEW WEEKS. THIS SHOULD NOT UNDULY SET BACK

THE NPRM SCHEDULE WHICH HAS ALREADY SEEN POSTPONE-
MENTS, AND COULD ON THE CONTRARY WORK TO OUR
ADVANTAGE BY EVIDENCING OUR READINESS TO LEAN OVER
BACKWARDS NOT TO COMPLICATE THE PRESENT DELICATE
TASK OF THE FRENCH AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS.

3. THE PRESS IS INCLINED TO INTERPRET LAST MONTH'S
GOF "PROPOSALS" (PARIS 4276) AS CONFIRMATION OF
GOF DEDICATION TO CONTINUATION OF THE CONCORDE
PROGRAM. WE ARE NOT SO SURE THAT IS INDEED THE
CASE. THE "PROPOSALS" ARE SO THIN (E.G., FITTING
EXTRA FUEL TANKS TO ACHIEVE MINIMAL EXTRA RANGE)
AS TO FOSTER SOME SUSPICION OF WHETHER THEY MAY
NOT BE CONTRIVED TO INVITE BRITISH REJECTION.
CONCORDE HAS BEEN A TREMENDOUS DRAIN ON FRENCH AS
WELL AS BRITISH PUBLIC FUNDS, AND CONCORDE'S COMMERCIAL
FUTURE IS SO BLEAK AND OTHER DEMANDS ON THE PUBLIC
TREASURY ARE SO GREAT TODAY THAT THE GOF MUST SURELY
BE ANXIOUS TO CUT ITS LOSSES ON CONCORDE. BUT THE
QUESTION IS HOW. THE GAULLISTS MUST SOMEHOW ESCAPE
FROM UNDER THE TAIN OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE
CONCORDE FIASCO AND SO AVOID A WINDFALL FOR THE OPPOSI-
TION IN THESE DAYS OF CONTINUING SPECULATION OVER
A POSSIBLE EARLY PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. WE WOULD
BE WELL ADVISED NOT TO OFFER OURSELVES UP AS
SCAPEGOATS IN THIS SITUATION, WHICH WE CAN DO BY
DELAYING ISSUANCE OF THE NPRM.

4. AS FOR THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE GOF MIGHT HAVE
US IN MIND AS ONE OF ITS SCAPEGOATS, IT IS WORTH
NOTING THAT CONTRARY TO THE SITUATION IN LONDON
NOT ONCE HAS THE GOF EXPRESSED TO US HERE ITS CONCERN
OVER THE IMPENDING ISSUANCE OF THE NPRM ON SST
ENGINE EMISSIONS. THIS CONTRASTS WITH ALMOST
FRENZIED CONCERN SHOWN BY GOF IN THE PAST OVER
ISSUANCE OF SST NOISE STANDARDS. WHILE WE MAY BE
READING TOO MUCH INTO GOF SILENCE IN THE PRESENT
INSTANCE, DEALING WITH THE FRENCH DOES INVITE
ONE TO A BIT OF CYNICISM.

STONE

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